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Message Text

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46
ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 DPW-01 OMB-01 SS-20 NSC-10 PM-07

H-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 /088 R

DRAFTED BY EA/VN:OABARTLEY/JDFINNEY:AOA
APPROVED BY EA:M. STEARNS
EA/VN-MR. WENZEL
AID-SA/VN-MR. WEDEMAN
---------- 064238
P 071341Z DEC 73
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 239793

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PINS VS
SUBJECT: GAO AND CIVILIAN PRISONER ISSUE

1. GAO HAS SOUGHT DEPARTMENT'S ADVICE IN RESPONDING TO HEAVY CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE TO CONDUCT INVESTIGATION OF SEVERAL PRISON SYSTEMS AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING GVN SYSTEM. EXAMPLE OF PRESSURE CITED BY GAO WAS LETTER FROM REP. ROBERT TIERNAN (D.-R.I.), ALSO SIGNED BY THIRTY THREE OTHER HOUSE MEMBERS, ASKING FOR DETAILED REPORT OF "WHETHER FOREIGN ASSISTANCE OR MILITARY AID PROGRAMS ARE BEING USED TO SUPPORT INCARCERATION AND TORTURE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTH VIET-NAM AND ELSEWHERE THROUGHOUT FREE WORLD." (COPY OF TIERNAN LETTER AND RELATED DOCUMENTS POUCHED TO POST.)

2. GAO REPRESENTATIVES IN MEETING WITH AID AND DEPT OFFI-CERS EXPLAINED THEY KEENLY AWARE OF MATTER OF SOVEREINGNTY INVOLVED AND THAT ANY INVESTIGATION WOULD BE SUBJECT TO USG AND GVN APPROVAL- THEY MORE THAN WILLING TO ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH GROUND RULES WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL CONCERNED BUT WOULD PERMIT GAO TO PROVIDE REASONABLE RESPONSE TO CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST. FROM GAO POINT OF VIEW
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ACCESS TO PRISONS OF THEIR CHOICE ESSENTIAL BUT THEY UNDER-

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STAND THAT PRISON VISITS, AT THE LEAST, WOULD BE
STRUCTURED BY THE GVN AND THAT CONVERSATIONS WITH PRISONERS

COULD PROBABLY NOT BE COMPLETELY PRIVATE. GAO WOULD
ENVISAGE SENDING SMALL TEAM OF INVESTIGATORS TO SAIGON FOR
PERIOD OF SEVERAL WEEKS WHICH WOULD REQUIRE ADMINISTRATIVE
AND INTERPRETER SUPPORT FROM EMBASSY.

3. WE ARE OF COURSE AWARE OF THE SENSITIVE PROBLEMS IN-
VOLVED AND WOULD APPRECIATE THE EMBASSY'S VIEWS BEFORE
RESPONDING TO GAO REQUEST. KISSINGER

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Disposition Authority: golinofr
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